SYNOPSIS

ROLE OF SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES ON USER ENGAGEMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENTS: INDIAN INTERNET USERS' PERSPECTIVE

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1. INTRODUCTION

"You can't just open a website and expect people to flood in. If you really want to succeed you have to create traffic."- Joel Anderson, Error! Bookmark not defined. CEO

1.1 INTERNET INDUSTRY IN INDIA

The increase of internet users in India is rapid. In the upcoming era, the internet users in India will increase with a significant pace. As per the speech of telecom minister Manoj Sinha in the Lok Sabha, there were 34,26,54,750 internet subscribers as on march 31, 2016. As per the analysis of ASSOCHAM-Deloitte joint study, it is expected that the internet users in India are expected to become almost double to 600 million in 2020 from approximately 343 million users in 2016. The fast development of telecommunications technology in the past few decades has changed many aspects of consumers' lives, including their purchasing process.

Consumers are often turning to e-commerce or electronic commerce, namely the buying and selling of products and services exclusively through electronic channels. E-commerce is expected to grow in India in the coming years. India, a fast-growing online market, shows optimistic projections for the e-commerce industry. Paul Ruban, General Manager of Fossil Group told IANS that the Indian e-commerce business is projecting a jump of upto $45 billion by 2021 and Close to 240 million people are forecast to buy goods and services online in India by 2019.

The report by the internet and mobile association of India (IAMAI) estimate that, more than half around 66% of the 180 million internet users in urban India are regular users of social media platforms. Thus a huge volume of peoples accessing social media. The basic activities for which social media are mostly used includes sharing information, commenting on blogs, following friends, communicating with one another & entertainment.

As per IAMAI 2016 report, for the first time online communication has surpassed social media websites to top the purpose to access mobile internet list. 80% of the urban users use mobile internet for communication whereas 74% access social networking sites using their mobile internet. In rural

India however, majority of the users access mobile internet for entertainment. Thus there is a huge potential for marketers to cater this huge base of social technology users, as India has the third-largest Internet user base in the world, with more than 300 million users though India has low internet penetration at 19% as compared with other developed and developing economies that have up to 90% penetration (IAMAI 2014).

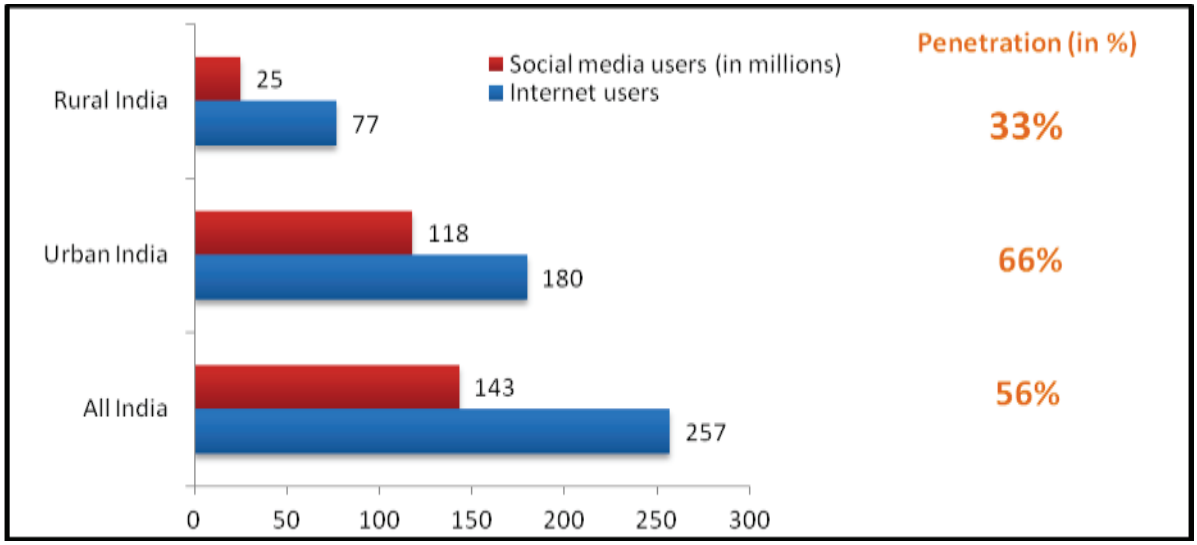

Figure 1: Internet and social media users in urban and rural India
Source: IAMAI 2016

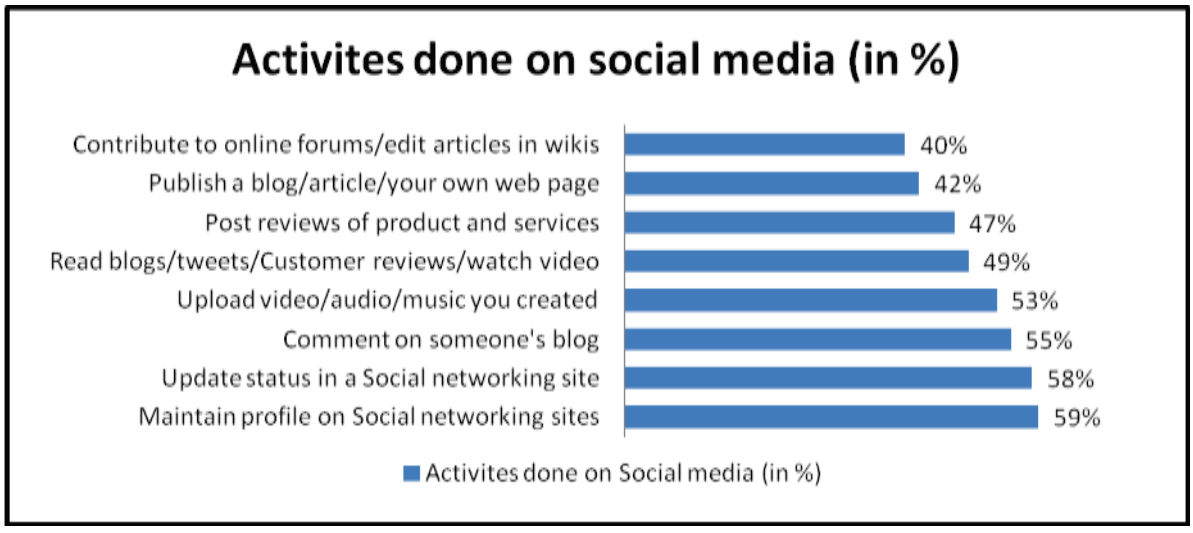

Figure 2: Activities done by Indian internet users on social media technologies
Source: IAMAI 2016

1.2 SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Social technology refers to 'socializing' using technology. The term 'Social Technology' was first mentioned at the University of Chicago by A. W. Small and Ch. R. Henderson around the end of the 19th century (Wikipedia, 2012). Rede de Tecnologia Social (RTS) 2014 states that social technology comprises products, techniques and/or re-applicable methodologies developed in the interaction with the community and that must represent effective solution in terms of social transformation. Social technologies such as crowdsourcing, online social networks, wikis, blogs/microblogs, forums and social commerce sites, media & file sharing, social gaming have changed today's media and information landscape (Mckinsey global institute,2012). The popularity of social technologies continues to grow in the society. Initially the term social technology was often referred to digital social networks such as facebook, twitter, linkedin etc but this concept has been redefined. Currently the concept of social technologies has several aspects which destabilize the dominant status of technology. It emphasizes social sciences and the humanities as society shapers, reconsiders the strength of social dimension in technological sciences. These technology facilitates social interactions and is enabled by a communications capability, such as the Internet or a mobile device. Examples are social technologies are blogs, wikis, social networks, discussion forums, social networks etc that enable social interactions. Several researches states that more than 80 percent of the world`s online population is interacting via social networks on a regular basis, but 65 percent of the world population 4.6 billion people still lacks internet access (Mckinsey global institute,2012). In this age of social technology, social tools are having a major impact on sales. As more people use the web for their product information and purchasing decisions, companies need to turn to technology to serve their customers. De Gennaro (2010) stated that social tools help customers find what they are looking for, build trust with your brand and drive real sales results. Just as email and instant messaging replaced the phone call, social technologies could have a similar effect in changing communication dynamics. In today's context

marketing departments are emphasizing more on social technology and shifting their focus towards social platforms by not only advertising and promoting themselves but also they're engaging with consumers, focusing on their unfiltered conversations, and soaking up huge amounts of data on consumer behavior and as a consequence of it marketers are producing nifty new insights for fine-tuning product requirements and exploring the process of relationship marketing. This is the era of social networking, collective intelligence, participation, collaborative creation, and borderless distribution. Every day we are bombarded with more publicity about collaborative environments, news feeds, blogs, wikis, podcasting, webcasting, folksonomies, social bookmarking, social citations, collaborative filtering, recommender systems, media sharing, massive multiplayer online games, virtual worlds, and mash-ups. Chui et al.,(2012) explained that the findings of a survey reveals that when social tools and technologies are integrated into the daily work of employees and adopted on a large scale throughout a new kind of network business can leads to improve operations, financial performance, and market share. The application of social technologies in organisational management is playing effective and efficient role in every aspect. It can be concluded that over the next few years the emerging "social technologies" of Web 2.0 and Web 0.3 will transform the management.

1.3 EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL TECHNLOGIES

Just as much as variety in social technology definitions, there are also different kinds of applications and platforms that represent social technologies. Therefore, it is necessary to summarize some general types of social technology in order to set boundaries between what belongs to this category and what is not. There is a broad range of social technologies used by enterprises today. Mckinsey report specifies:- social networks, blogs/ microblogs, ratings and reviews, social commerce, wikis, discussion forums, shared workspaces, crowdsourcing, social gaming, media and file sharing.

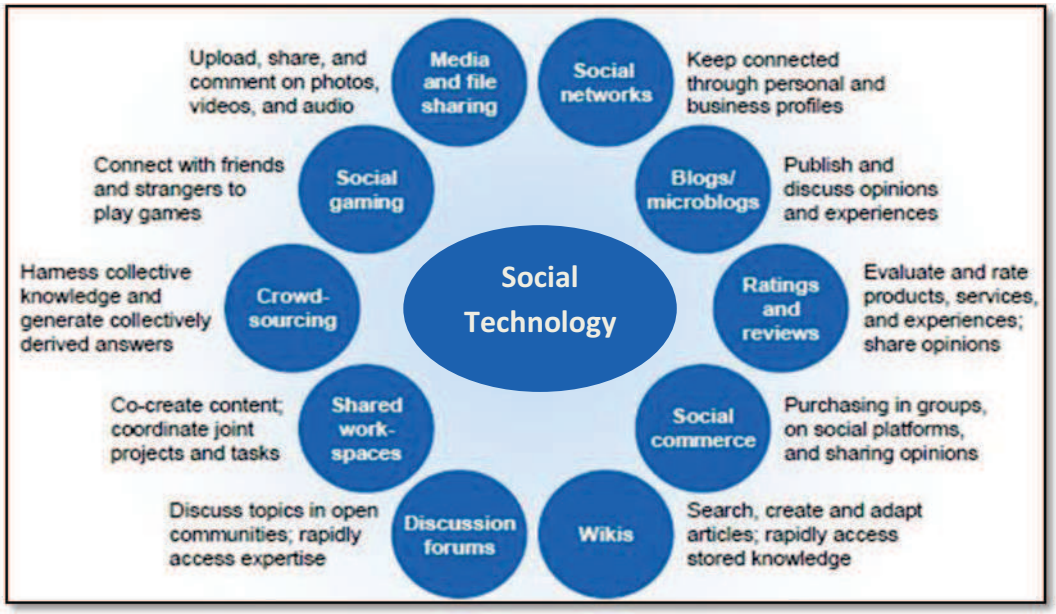
Social Technology
Media and file sharing
Upload, share, and comment on photos, videos, and audio
Social networks
Keep connected through personal and business profiles
Social gaming
Connect with friends and strangers to play games
Blogs/ microblogs
Publish and discuss opinions and experiences
Crowd-sourcing
Harness collective knowledge and generate collectively derived answers
Ratings and reviews
Evaluate and rate products, services, and experiences; share opinions
Shared work-spaces
Co-create content; coordinate joint projects and tasks
Social commerce
Purchasing in groups, on social platforms, and sharing opinions
Discussion forums
Discuss topics in open communities; rapidly access expertise
Wikis
Search, create and adapt articles; rapidly access stored knowledge

Figure 3: Social Technologies
Source- Mckinsey Global Institute (July 2012)

The summarized description of various social technologies is as:-

1.3.1 SOCIAL COMMERCE- Sale of physical or virtual goods on social platforms using social technologies. Social commerce is a subset of electronic commerce that involves social media, online media that supports social interaction and user contributions to assist online buying and selling of products and services. Examples of social commerce websites are amazon, flipkart, voonik etc

1.3.2 WIKIS- Mayfield (2008) defined wikis as websites that allows people to add, modify or delete contents in collaboration with others and the most popular wiki is wikipedia, an online encyclopedia that was started in 2001. Andrew(2009) stated that all previous contributions are stored permanently and all actions are visible and reversible in wikis. According to Emigh & Herring(2005) wikis require rigorous version control afforded by the system.

1.3.3 RATINGS AND REVIEWS - A rating and reviews service that provides qualified reviews from real customers who have made a purchase from any organisation. Nambisan (2002) explaines that customer reviews are widely available for products and services, generating great value for both

consumers and companies. According to Bronner & de Hoog (2010) firms actively encourage consumers to rate and review products and services online.

1.3.4 BLOGS / MICROBLOGS - Andrew (2009) stated that the term 'blog' is shortened form of 'Web log'. Blog providers offer space and tools (i.e. a web 2.0 platform) for easy content publishing such as texts graphics, videos and links to web pages thus encourage a two-way communication scheme. Kwak et al., (2010) defined microblogs as a special cast of blogs considered as a passage between social networking sites, blogs and even news media. Users of these platforms (e.g. Twitter) are able to send and read short (140 characters) messages and providing a possibility to write and publish short registries but also to keep in touch by following people or organizations of interest.

1.3.5 SOCIAL NETWORKS – According to Mayfield (2008) Social network sites or social network services allow people to establish personal webpages and then connect with friends for the purpose of sharing information and communication. By using these platforms (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn) participants are able to create personal profiles, invite friends or colleagues to view or participate on their profiles (e.g. add content, like), and to send messages to each other.

1.3.6 MEDIA AND FILE SHARING - Also refered as content communities, these platforms devote users to create, publish and share various media content. Within this type we can differentiate video, picture and sound sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Soundcloud). Another category of content communities is intellectual sharing sites, where authors of original content can publish their works. Mayfield (2008) stated that content community has a particular focus on sharing a certain type of content such as photo, video, music and bookmarks.

1.3.7 SOCIAL GAMING - Social gaming commonly refers to playing online games that allow or require social interaction between players. A social network game is a type of online game that is

played through social networks. They typically features multiplayer and asynchronous gameplay mechanics. Major players in the social gaming space currently includes ibibo, zapak, zynga, yahoogames, playup and miniclip.

1.3.8 CROWDSOURCING - Howe(2006b) defined crowdsourcing as the act of a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call. Howe (2006a) stated that the benefits derived form crowdsourcing is that firms can gain access to a very large community of potential workers with diverse range of skills and expertise at a much reduced cost as compared to performing the task in-house.

1.3.9 SHARED WORKSPACES - A collaborative workspace or shared workspace is an inter-connected environment in which all the participants in dispersed locations can access and interact with each other just as inside a single entity. The environment may be supported by electronic communications and groupware which enable participants to overcome space and time differentials.

1.3.10 DISCUSSION FORUMS - The internet forum is also known as community bulletin board or message board. The formation of forum starts with a group of people who share the same interests or would like to discuss a specific topic. Forum has a strong sense of community with one or several administrators serve the role as moderators that regulate improper posts on the forums. Mayfield(2008) discussed that the threads(discussion) do not necessarily started by the administrator and unlike blogs which is owned and managed by the bloggers, threads are started by any members in the forums who want to discuss and share something with others.

1.4 THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES

Mckinsey report (June 2016) states that now a days executives have recognized the potential of blogs, wikis, and social networks to reap organisational benefits. Beginning in the mid-2000s, companies began testing social technologies within business units and within functions such as marketing to improve critical functional tasks. Social-networking sites and microblogging platforms remain the tools of choice in the pursuit of broad communication and collaboration. After an initial spate of enthusiasm, the adoption of blogging as a leadership-messaging tool leveled off. Wikis have had less impact historically, and their use has stalled now. Social networks also have expanded and have integrated with companies and are interacting with customers and also creating networks linking with both employees and outside stakeholders.

1.5 THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES

Social technologies enclose a range of tools that allow users to interact and share data. From users' perspective social technologies increase the desire and the need of knowledge sharing. As a consequence, one of the most important tangible benefits inside an organization is the unlocking innovation. This kind of technologies has exploded into the business world. Forrester Research, (2009) reveals that tools like facebook, twitter, and linkedin appeared with personal use, but recent surveys have demonstrated that inside an organization users employ social technologies to improve their job not just for personal matters. Each day, more and more people are choosing social technologies as their preferred method of communication with peers. De Gennaro (2010) explained that just as email and instant messaging replaced the phone call, social technologies could have a similar effect in changing communication dynamics. According to Forrester analysts there are some key trends that will make the inclusion of social technology in the IT management tool set a necessity. Koplowitz and Owens (2010) stated that web 2.0 tools allow people to ask questions, share ideas, and discover people skills regardless of the hierarchy. Such these tools help to break down organizational and cultural barriers such as time differences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Johannessen et al. (2001), Andersen (2011), Bugin et al.(2011) stated that since 21st century social technology has gained meaning as social softwares such as wikis , blogs, networks, gaming etc. Alberghini et al. (2010) defined Social technologies as any technologies used for goals of socium or with any social basis, including social hardware (traditional communication media), social software (computer mediated media), and social media (social networking tools). Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) define social technology tools as Internet based applications that help individuals to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives. Kaplan and Haenlein(2010) stated that these applications can include collaborative projects (i.e. Wikipedia), blogs, content communities (e.g. YouTube), social networking sites (e.g Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds.

2.2 INFORMATION VALUE

Pepitone(2010), concluded that social technologies are majorly used as a source of information. Pew Report by Fox (2011) suggests that people use online social tools to gather information, share stories, and discuss concerns. According to Suter, Alexander & Kaplan (2005) web-based technologies are emerging as zones for information sharing, collaboration, and community formation and extension. O'reilly & Battelle (2009) also considered social media sites which are built upon a fundamental characteristic of web2.0 technologies, for the purpose of harnessing collective intelligence. Kozinets(1999), Hennig-Thurau & Walsh (2004) explained that Social media has provided consumers a new platform to seek and distribute information. Kozinets (1999) and Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) categorizations virtual community and assumed that information exists in social media websites.

2.3 ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

Agichtein et al., (2008) concluded that entertainment value in social technologies arises from the fun and play. Manthiou et al., (2013) viewed social technology users from a hedonic perspective as pleasure seekers, feeling entertained and experiencing enjoyment that occurs in social media activities. Smith (2011) stated that online communities allow members to play games or participate in contests, leading to pleasure and entertainment. According to Liu & Arnett (2000) entertaining actions can motivate users participation and promote their excitement and concentration, and make them enjoy the experience on social technologies. Liu & Arnett (2000), Manthiou et al., (2014) also concluded that entertainment boosts social technologies success because it motivates users to participate, promote their excitement and keep them coming back.

2.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) define social value as the perceived utility acquired from an alternative's association with one or more specific social groups. Sarker et al. (2005) defined social value as the degree to which the technology is capable of enabling members to build social relationships and knowledge networks. Johannessen et al., (2001) describe social presence as a dimension of social technology and define as the degree to which virtual team members feel close to one another.

2.5 EASE OF USE

Davis (1989) defines perceived ease of use as “the degree to which a person believes that using a technology will be free from effort. If a system is relatively easy to use, individuals will be more willing to learn about its features and finally get engaged with technology. Perceived ease of use (PEOU) was also theorised as the direct determinant of behavior intention in a number of theories and models such as Technology acceptance model, Technology acceptance model 2 and combined TAM & TAM2. Adams, Nelson & Todd (1992), Davis (1989), Thompson, Higgins &Howell(1991) studied that perceiced ease of use has been find as a direct determinant of usage behavior.

2.6 USER ENGAGEMENT

Pagani and Mirabello(2011) defined engagement as a state of being involve, occupied, retained and intrinsically interested in something. Attfield, kazai and Lalmas(2011) define user engagement in the online context as the emotional, cognitive and behavioral connection that exist at any point in time and possible over time between user and resources. Obrien & Cairns(2015) and Lehmann, Lalmas & Dupret (2012) relate the definition of user engagement with user experience which includes characteristics such increase attention, positive effect, sensory and intellectual satisfaction and mastery.

2.7 ONLINE SOCIAL CAPITAL

Bourdieu and Wacquant stated that individual social capital is "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network. Ellison et al. (2007), Steinfield et al. (2008), Valenzuela et al. (2009), Johnston et al. (2013), Sabatini and Sarracino (2014) studies reported that there exist positive relationship between the use of social tools and individual social capital. Paxton (1999) stated that individuals social capital allows a person to draw on resources from other members of the networks to which he or she belongs.

2.8 WORD OF MOUTH (WOM)

Arndt (1967), Rogers (1995) explained that WOM is typically characterized as oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator in which the communicator delivers a non-commercial message). Brodie et al. (2011) studied the role of WOM by engaged users about the product, services and brands in enhancing business performance. Also Balasubramanian and Mahajan (2001), Hennig-Thurau et al.(2004) determines perceived social value of the participants of virtual community as a motivating factor for electronic word of mouth communication.

2.9 PURCHASE INTENTION

Salisbury, Pearson, Pearson and Miller (2001) states that online purchase intention is the strength of a user's intention to carry out a specified purchasing behaviour via the Internet. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the theory of reasoned action suggests that individual behaviour can be predicted from intentions that correspond directly in terms of action and target. Day (1969) stated that intentional measures can be more effective than behavioural measures to capture individual's mind as individual may make purchases due to constraints instead of real preference when purchase is considered.

2.10 POST PURCHASE ACTION

Here post purchase action involves the attitude of consumer on online platforms after purchases. Neal et al (2004) argues that it is one of the most important stages in the consumer decision making process as it directly affects the consumers' purchases of the same product or service from the same supplier in the future. Venkatesan (1973) found that the result of satisfaction to the consumer from the purchase of a product or service was that more favorable post purchase attitudes. Youl Ha (2006) in his research found how user satisfaction affects outcome variables such as expectation, performance, disconfirmation, brand loyalty, attribution and repurchase. Westbrook(1987) describe that the post-purchase period consists of product ownership and usage which provide contexts of satisfaction appraisal, seller-directed complaints and repurchase planning. Geva and Goldman(1991) discussed possible inconsistencies in consumer‘s post-purchase attitude when faced with disconfirmed expectations. Findings of Youngcheong cho et al.(2002) reveals that customers in offline environment show stronger personal competence than in online and also that customers in online environment expressed higher prospensity to complain if there are delayed response by the seller.

3. NEED OF THE STUDY

Social Technology use isn't quite universal—but it's getting close. Today the world is all within the social technological world. Majority of the population now has at least one social networking profile; more than half use two or more social networks (Hashtags Staff 2013). Thus there is a need to study in this area. According to the statistics of European Union (EU) 2015, 39% of EU enterprises used social media (social networks, blogs, content-sharing sites and wikis) and around 78% of businesses use these platforms to build their image, market products and to obtain customers' opinions or reviews. Social networks are most preferred type of social media as 36 % of enterprises in the EU used social networks empowering customers to connect. Koch et al.(2012) explored that organizations are realizing the potential benefits of social media technologies and are implementing internal systems for knowledge sharing, collaboration, virtual teams, and more to boost worker productivity and improve performance.

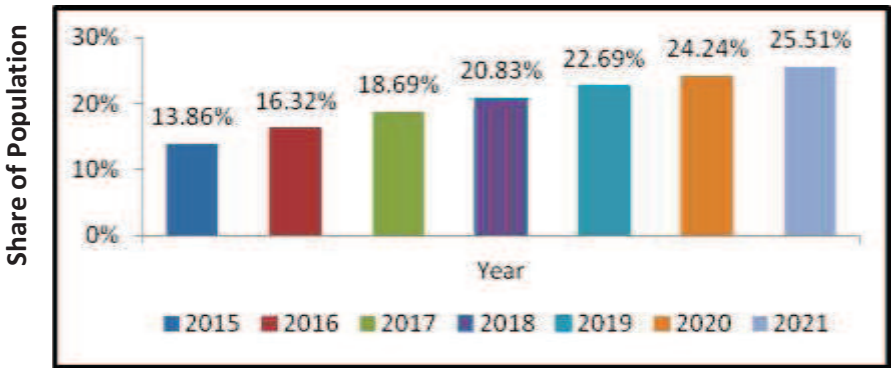

Figure 4: Social network user penetration in India from 2015 to 2021
(Source: - https://www.statista.com/statistics/240960/share-of-indian-population-using-social-networks)

Figure 4 depicts that there will be around 283 million social network users in India in 2018, up from close to 216.5 million in 2016 . Active social media users grew at 15 percent, since Jan 2015 to 136 million in 2016 (social media report). Vijay Shankar (Facebook head of Products -Facebook Lite) reported that on a daily basis, 59 million users in India are accessing facebook and 53 million are accessing from their mobile phones. Thus there is huge traffic of social technology users and thus there are lots of opportunities for marketers to reap benefits from online platforms as Social media now plays almost as large a role in purchasing decisions. India Social Media Stats 2016 reveals that

E-Commerce in India is currently at 2 Lakh Crores and is predicted to grow 5 Lakh Crores in 2017 and also India is second largest online market behind China. Social technologies are viewed as the second-most effective digital marketing tactic for customer retention purposes, behind only email (TNW News). And still most of the small businesses have no social media presence at all. Social technologies are turning out to be an effective medium to reach potential customers, without having to do huge marketing efforts and bear enormous marketing costs. Social tools are used often in customer-engagement processes such as public relations, customer relationship management, and the execution of marketing activities there is particularly high potential for companies to increase the value they are reaping from these technologies. Social Technology has broad scope but still most of the companies lack experience in implementing and operating such platforms. In essence, they are not familiar with the characteristics of Social technology and its users.

The rising trend of social technologies makes the present study important. To the best of knowledge acquired from literature review, very less scholarly effort has been undertaken by marketing academics to understand internet user behavior under the different elements of social technology to deduce outcomes in terms of online social capital, purchase intention, word of mouth and post purchase action. This research would aid to the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) which posited ease of use and usefulness as important variables for acceptance of social technologies by adding attributes such as information value, entertainment value and social value. Earlier researchers had not shown the influence of social technology elements such as information value, entertainment value, social value and ease of use on behavioral outcomes of individual. In previous studies, the social technologies features were investigated in terms of ease of use, usefulness, adoption , convenience, security, speed of operation, customer service etc. Thus the study would facilitate the research by generating a new segmentation criterion called information, entertainment, social and ease of use attributes of social technology and this study would aim at understanding and obtaining insights of internet user buying behavior under the context of social technologies in India. The research motivation is based on two perspectives. From theoretical consideration, there are

abundant research publications regarding online consumer behavior. These studies are typically supported by theories drawn from traditional consumer behavior researches. However, literature focusing on the influence of social technologies on internet user behavior is lacking. This study is more related to practical usage and implementation instead of theories and models.

From the perspective of practical application, social technologies in india is a emerging area and most companies still lack experience in implementing and operating these platforms optimally. In essence, they are not familiar with the characteristics of social technology and their users. This study may provide some insights for managers and practitioners as it is studied from internet user's perspective.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social technologies has continued to experience exponential growth. However, within existing literature the phenomenon is still very much in its infancy, and to our knowledge there is very limited research that focuses on several outcomes of user engagements such as user's online social capital, word of mouth, purchase intention, post purchase action**.**

The framework will study the relationship between antecedents of user engagement and its consequents. In this study the conceptual framework establish the relationship between social technology elements, user engagement, user's online social capital, word of mouth, purchase intention and post purchase action.

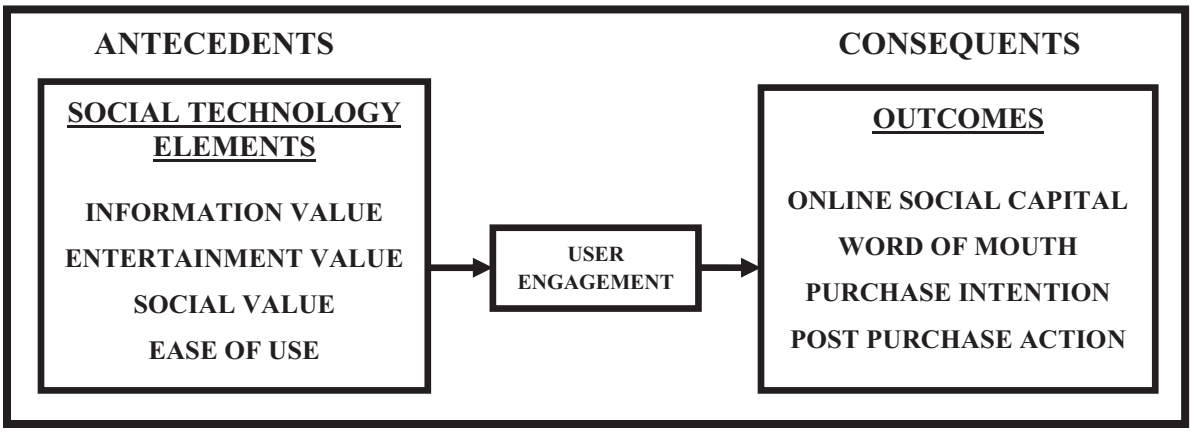

Figure 5: Conceptual Framework

5. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS

5.1 OBJECTIVES

The proposed study has the following objectives:

Objective 1: To classify social technologies on the basis of information value, entertainment value, social value and ease of use.

Objective 2: To study the effect of social technology elements on engagement level of internet users.

Objective 3: To study the effect of user engagement on online social capital, word of mouth, purchase intention and post purchase action.

Objective 4: To propose a strategic framework guiding market driven organisations to plan their marketing strategies by identifying and leveraging capabilities of social technology.

5.2 HYPOTHESIS

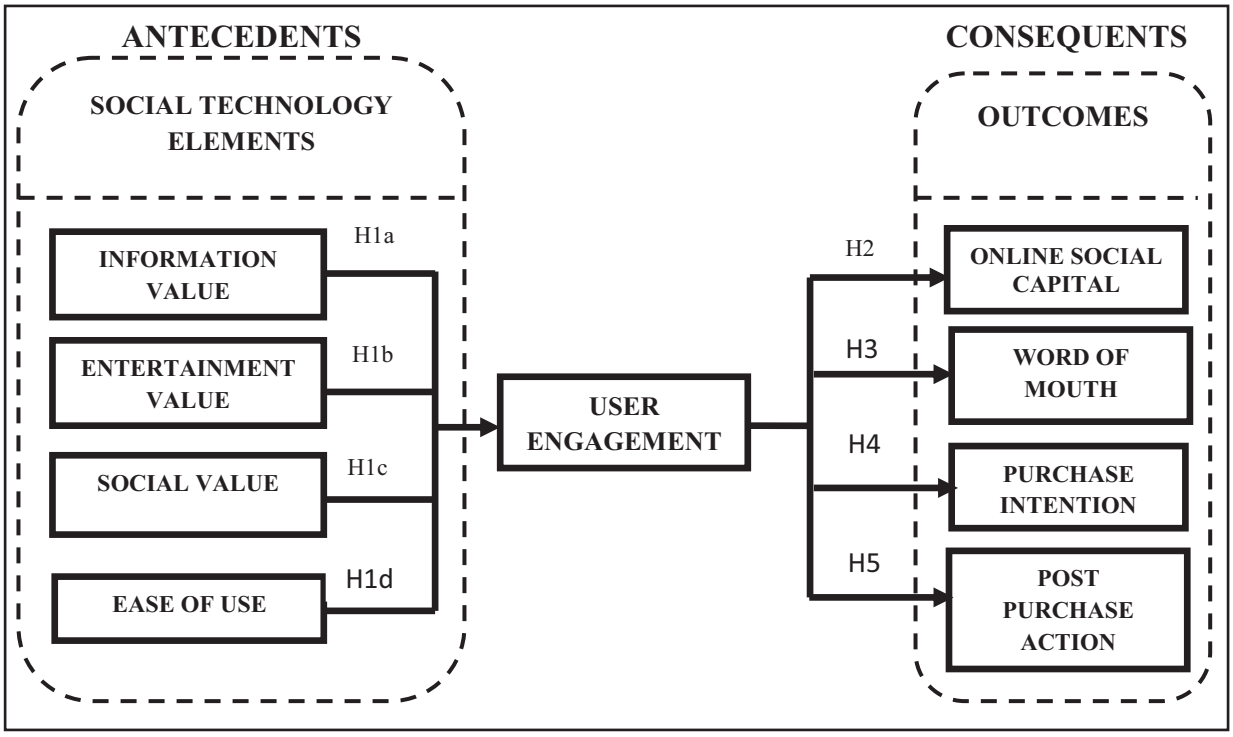

Figure 6: Conceptual framework

HYPOTHESIS:-

The review of literature results in a conceptual framework as shown below. The model hypothesises that social technology elements are antecedents to user engagement and online social capital, word of mouth, purchase intention and post purchase action are consequents. It further hypothesises that user engagement relates these antecedents and outcomes. This gives rise to the following testable hypotheses. The study will be carried out in order to test the following hypotheses. The hypotheses for the study are drawn on the bases of following facts and previous researches.

5.2.1 Social technology elements and user engagement.

Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory by Katz (1959) is an approach frequently applied by technology and media researchers to understand the goals and motivations of individuals for engagement with different forms of content. Dholakia et al. (2004), (Raacke and Bonds-Raacke(2008) explained that previous applications of U&G theory over communities and social media showed that consuming entertaining and informative content is an important factor for participation, according to Park et al. (2009) entertainment was found to have a stronger effect. Muntinga et al. (2011) studied that entertainment and information were found to be among the main motivations for online engagement in the form of consumption, creation, and contribution. Brodie et al. (2011), Kietzmann et al. (2011) stated that the terms engagement and participation became the central construct used to describe the nature of participants' specific interactions and/or interactive experiences. Mortazavi et al. (2014) identified four attributes of social networks that promote engagement: social relationships, entertainment, information access, and ease of use. Employing Davis' (1986) technology acceptance model, Pinho and Soares (2013) showed that ease of use lead to greater intention to engage on social technologies.

Therefore, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H1: Social Technology elements have positive effect on user engagement.

5.2.1.a Social technologies with information value and user engagement.

Muntinga et al. (2011) state that information related content are among the key motivations for engaging individuals online. Vries et al., (2012) research shows that people generally tend to have a higher positive attitude towards informative content and are more motivated to participate with the content.

Thus we formulate following hypotheses;

H1a: Social technologies with high information value have positive effect on user engagement.

5.2.1.b Social technologies with entertainment value and user engagement.

Vries et al., (2012) studies have shown that entertainment content has a positive effect on attitude and motivates consumers to engage with the content. According to Park et al., (2009) entertainment content was found to have the strongest effect on users in social media.

thus we formulate following hypothesis;

H1b: Social technologies with high entertainment value have positive effect on user engagement.

5.2.1.c Social technologies with social value and user engagement.

Hennig - Thurau etal, (2010) stated that social value derived from social platforms has been argued to derive the adoption and usage levels of the platforms. According to Vries and Carlson, (2014) higher perception of social interaction value of social technologies may lead to the user using the technology more frequently and become more engaged.

thus we formulate following hypothesis;

H1c: Social technologies with high social value have positive effect on user engagement.

5.2.1.d Social technologies with ease of use and user engagement.

According to Jacques et al. the characteristics of engaging systems that emerge from study has included ease of use. Employing Davis' (1986) technology acceptance model, Pinho and Soares

(2013) showed that ease of use lead to greater intention to engage on social networks. Later, Mortazavi et al. (2014) identified ease of use as one of the attributes of social networks that promote engagement.

thus we formulate following hypothesis;

H1d: Ease of use of Social technologies has positive effect on user engagement.

5.2.2 User Engagement and Online social capital.

Pinho (2013) define that engagement would lead to an increase in social capital for the user. Scheffert, Horntvedt, and Chazdon (2009) also considered engagement as a source of social capital. Tomai et al.,(2010) find increased individual's social capital in form of increasing sense of belongingness, trust, well being when individual is engaged in virtual communities.

thus we formulate following hypothesis;

H2: User engagement has positive effect on user's online social capital.

5.2.3 User engagement and word of mouth.

Cheung et al. (2011) suggest that a engagement have a higher propensity to spread word-of-mouth communication and also Kumar et al. (2010) suggests that the value of user engagement is comprised of user behavior via feedback provided to the firm as word-of-mouth . Wallace et al. (2014) also presents evidence that users who are highly engaged are more likely to offer word-of-mouth. J-P De clerck (i-scoop founder) stated that word-of-mouth marketing is a connected phenomenon, that also includes offline marketing. People increasingly use various online channels as well as offline mode also to share views, information.

thus we formulate following hypothesis;

H3: User engagement has positive effect on the generation of word of mouth among users.

5.2.4 User engagement and purchase intention.

Findings of Rahman zoha et al. empirical study showed supporting evidence of the positive relationship between user engagement and intention to purchase. Reason behind is the time duration and also because of the high social media consumption habit, users are tending to behave positively towards online shopping.

thus we formulate following hypothesis;

H4: User engagement has positive effect on user's purchase intention.

5.2.5 User engagement and Post purchase action.

Gummerus et al. (2012) ,Wirtz et al. (2013) stated that users engage in behaviors such as recommendations, helping other consumers, writing reviews, joining an online discussion, commenting on posts, and participating in competitions or online surveys writing feedbacks, opinions, complaints and depict their post purchase action. Kumar et al. (2010) studied that that the value of user engagement is comprised of user behavior via feedback, opinions, reviews. Youl Ha (2006) in his research found actions after purchase result in outcome variables such as expectation, performance, disconfirmation, brand loyalty, attribution and repurchase.

thus we formulate following hypothesis;

H5: User engagement has positive effect on user's post purchase action.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study would be descriptive research (survey based) and qualitative research (focus group study).

6.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on all active internet users those who are using social technologies for several activities such as blogging, sharing, commenting, chatting, gaming, etc. It covers all those users from various diverse locations in India, those who perform several activities on internet using social technologies before, during and after making a purchase or also when they have no intention to purchase.

As the study aims at concluding some general factors that influence Indian internet users under social technology context, the ideal situation is to have participants with diverse geographical location. Here the diversity of participants in terms of geographical location is not ideal. Thus it is impossible to define specific area of study. But as the study does not focus on the geographical and cultural differences, this study would cover respondents from diverse geographical locations and respondents would be approached from online platforms.

The data would be collected from internet users of various occupations, different age groups and of both gender.

Further to test the proposed strategic framework, focus group study would be done with small group of people around ten to twelve in number. This group would include experts such as academicians, practitioners & other professionals from digital marketing industry and other individuals etc.

6.3 SAMPLING DESIGN

1. As the population is infinite so in order to select the respondents, the non-probability sampling technique i.e. purposive would be used for the following reasons:

- Purposive sampling will be used to target the respondents using online questionnaire distribution.

2. For the selection of experts, the sampling technique such as purposive sampling would be used.

6.4 SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

This research design requires huge sample size for the purpose of representation. For the purpose of this study, sample size determination formula for infinite population ('unknown population') is briefly discussed**.**

Sample Size Formula for Infinite Population:-

The following sample size formula for infinite population (more than 50,000) is used to arrive at a representative number of respondents when population estimate is unknown (Godden, 2004):

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times p(1-p)}{M^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size for infinite population
Z = Z value
P = population proportion (expressed as decimal)
M = Margin of Error

In order to minimize the bias and obtain realistic sample size, sample size is evaluated as-
Estimating 50% of population with 4% Margin of Error

Population scenario	Z value at 95% confidence level	Margin of error	Sample size calculation	Sample size
50%	1.96	4%	$(1.96)^2$*0.5(1-0.5)/0.04^2	600.25
				Estimated sample size = 600

Hence, the proposed sample size for the study will be **600**. Since the study is based on infinite sample, this sample size can be enlarged further**.**

6.5 SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

The data would be collected using both primary as well as secondary sources.

1. Primary data: - Questionnaire

- A sample questionnaire would be uploaded on the online survey platform to generate a link to the survey. And then the survey link would be posted on different Indian social media platforms (including social network sites, blogs, forums, etc.) as well as other applications such as instant messaging tools.

2. Secondary data: Secondary data will provide the information and facts related to study. Thus secondary data, for the study will be collected from the following sources:

- Journal
- Reports
- Magazines
- Books
- Past data
- Websites, Blogs etc.

6.6 SCALES PROPOSED TO BE USED FOR DESIGINING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

For measuring these identified variables several scales would be used to frame the questionnaire. For information value scales such as Novak et al. (2000); Chen and Wells(1999); Wells, Leavitt & McConville(1971); Leavitt(1970) would be used. And for entertainment value scales such as Chen and Wells (1999); Reibstein (2001) etc. are proposed to be used. Hoffman, Novak, and Randy Stein scale for social value and Purchase intention would be measured by scale adapted from Jarvenpaa, Tracktinsky and Vitale (2000). And further scales such as Moore and Benbasat (1991) for ease of use and User engagement scale (UES) scale by Obrien for measuring user engagement would be used.

These instruments would be used to frame the questionnaire for testing the studied variables. The content validity, construct validity, reliability analysis of these scales would be done and further the questionnaire would be used for data collection. And also some other scales if required would also be used and researcher can also frame the question on their own based on literature review.

6.7 STATISICAL TOOLS TO BE USED

To test the given hypotheses, researcher is keen to analyze the data by using Structural Equation Modeling (PLS SEM) as the statistical approach for data analysis. Bollen (1989) explained that SEM is a general statistical framework for many multivariate statistics such as regression analysis, path analysis, factor analysis, ANOVA, canonical correlation analysis. The decisive reason that SEM is applied is because there are abstract and theoretical constructs concluded from theoretical literature which are unobserved and the ability to represent unobserved concepts and constructs distinguished SEM from other techniques. In addition, with so many number variables at hand, SEM provides visual diagrams that clearly depict the complex relationships among variables.

Further the questionnaire would be distributed after the reliability test of questionnaire through pilot study and changes would be made if required and then questionnaire would be distributed to the respondents for data collection.

Also other relevant inferential statistical tools and descriptive statistics would be used for data analysis.

6.8 TABULAR SUMMARIZATION OF SYNOPSIS

S.NO	OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESIS	METHODOLOGY
1	**To classify social technologies on the basis of information value, entertainment value, social value and ease of use.**	*Classification of social technologies would be done on the basis of focus group interview and descriptive statistics such as mean, averages etc would also be used.
2	**To study the effect of various social technology elements on engagement level of internet users.** HYPOTHESIS **H1:** Social technologies with high information value have positive effect on user engagement. **H2:** Social technologies with high entertainment value have positive effect on user engagement **H3:** Social technologies with high social value have positive effect on user engagement. **H4:** Ease of use of Social technology has positive effect on user engagement.	*Primary data collection would be done from the respondents using questionnaire survey and secondary data sources would also be used. *Hypothesis testing would be done using structural equation modeling. *Other relevant inferential statistical tools and descriptive statistics would also be used.
3	**To study the effect of user engagement on online social capital, word of mouth, purchase intention and post purchase action.** HYPOTHESIS **H5:** User engagement has positive effect on user's online social capital. **H6:** User engagement has positive effect on the generation of word of mouth among users. **H7:** User engagement has positive effect on user's purchase intention. **H8:** User engagement has positive effect on user's post purchase action.	*Data would be collected from respondents using questionnaire survey and data from secondary sources would also be used. *Hypothesis testing would be done using Structural equation modeling. *Other relevant inferential statistical tools and descriptive statistics etc would also be used.
4	**To propose a strategic framework guiding market driven organisations to plan their marketing strategies by identifying and leveraging capabilities of social technology.**	*Framework would be proposed on the basis of the conclusions drawn from literature review and findings of the study and focus group study would be done in order to test the framework.

PROPOSED CHAPTERIZATION

The thesis will contain the following chapters:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Chapter 3 – Existing market scenario of social technology in India

Chapter 4 – Research Methodology

Chapter 5 – Analysis and Results

Chapter 6 – Future Prospects and Limitations

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